A CHARGE:

DELIVERED TO THE

Clergy of the Diocese of Fredericton

IN THE CATHEDRAL,

ON TUESDAY, JULY 3, 1877.

BY

JOHN, BISHOP OF FREDERICTON.

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CHARGE TO THE CLERGY.

My Dear Brethren:

I must ask your indulgence for too hurriedly setting before you some topics of counsel and encouragement, having had little leisure for writing, amidst the perplexity and distraction which the late terrible calamity has brought upon us.

Some portion of the work in which I have been engaged, on behalf of the Church, has been as follows: In the year 1874, I confirmed 185 persons, ordained five Priests and two Deacons, consecrated two Churches and one Burial-Ground, and travelled 3,458 miles. Many visits were made to different parts of the Diocese; and in September, in company with the clerical and lay delegates chosen by our Synod, I attended, for the first time, the Provincial Synod of the several Dioceses of Canada. We were received with the greatest cordiality; and I have reason to believe that our presence was considered of advantage to our Canadian brethren.

Two of our little band were called away by death during this year: one, a long-tried and faithful Missionary, who, having resigned his parish from increase of bodily infirmity, had nevertheless rendered me most valuable service in the Cathedral during the illness of my late Sub-Dean, and had been carrying on the hard work of a country Mission for twenty-five years. The other, a student of St. Augustine's College, which has

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furnished us with many faithful labourers, was cut off in the prime of life by an internal and most painful disorder.

I ought not to omit that at the Provincial Synod, we were all cheered by the presence and animating words of my dear and honoured brother, the Bishop of Lichfield, who, after the Synod, travelled 1,500 miles in order to fulfil a promise that he would visit Fredericton; and on the 4th of October preached twice in our Cathedral, and addressed our Sunday Scholars with such good effect, that of their own accord, they proposed to contribute to the education of one of the Melanesian scholars at Norfolk Island. Ten pounds sterling has been raised by them annually, for this good purpose.

The intercession services were held as usual this year, and a lively interest created in the Diocese of Algoma.

In the year 1875, I visited a large portion of the Diocese, and confirmed 900 persons, ordained one Priest and three Deacons, consecrated one Church, and travelled 2,373 miles. It is very satisfactory to find that in the Confirmations the number of those who communicate on the same day, or on the next Sunday, has largely increased; in many parishes nearly all communicating, in others the great majority; though I have still to deplore the existence of backward parishes, in which those who made promises failed to fulfil their engagements, and appeared to be totally ignorant of the spiritual loss they sustained. Parents are, I fear, greatly responsible for this neglect of duty, and seem to be much hindered by a foolish notion, to which the Church gives no sanction, that it is improper to have their children confirmed before they are fifteen or sixteen years of age. By their delay it often happens, that this duty is postponed till the young people are easily led away by wrong impressions; become independent and most difficult to be convinced; and are led to believe that they can receive no benefit from the ordinance, unless they can

declare themselves converted, not after the manner of the Bible, but after the manner of human invention.

Having been taken suddenly unwell before the close of this Visitation, I was thankful to avail myself of the services of my valued friend and brother, the Bishop of Maine, who promptly and most kindly confirmed in several country Missions for me.

In the year 1876, I visited the North Shore and other parts of the Diocese, and confirmed 403 persons, ordained four Priests and three Deacons, consecrated two Churches and two Burial-Grounds, and travelled 3,261 miles.

Early in the Summer I had the great satisfaction of receiving into our Church, through the kind assistance of Rev. L. A. Hoyt, the whole colony of Danish emigrants, two hundred in number; and of ordaining, after due examination, one of their number, who had been a school-teacher, the Rev. N. M. Hansen. As Mr. Hansen speaks both Danish and English, and read the Gospel in both languages in the Cathedral, he is well qualified to lead the devotions of the people in their own tongue, and to help those who are desirous to acquire the English language. I procured one hundred prayer-books, for the use of the settlers, in the Danish language. They have already begun to build a small Church, and I should feel greatly obliged, on their behalf, by any donations sent to me for that purpose, as assistance is much needed. Her Royal Highness, the Princess of Wales, has kindly sent a donation of twenty pounds sterling.

This year was to me a sorrowful one, being marked by the death of three old and valued friends. The first, my dear fellow-worker in the Vineyard, four years my senior, Bishop of the Diocese of Newfoundland. Few Bishops have presided over a harder field of labour, or have worked more faithfully or successfully in it. He left fifty-two clergy, where he found only twelve; a college endowed with £7,500; two orphanages; a

clergy widows' fund; churches doubled in number; and a Cathedral partly completed, which requires only a dignified Chancel to make it a very noble and striking Church. His was a mind of no common order. An accomplished scholar; a well-read theologian; exact and punctilious in his requirements of duty, if stern to others, sterner to himself; playful as a child, and full of genial humor; flinching from no difficulty, and ever ready to expose himself to the severest hardships; bountiful to the Church; a true friend in need and sickness,—he shortened his days by exposure to the storms of winter in assisting a sick clergyman. He died in a portion of his Diocese at present deprived of all Episcopal supervision, and left only one wish ungratified,—to be buried under the shadow of the Cathedral he had built, and in which he had so long ministered.

Another friend, if less distinguished, was no less dear to me,—the Rev. James Ford, a brother Prebendary of Exeter Cathedral; a ripe and elegant scholar, translator of Dante, and versed in Spanish and Italian literature. His practical commentary on Scripture is well known to the younger clergy of this Diocese by his liberal presents, and I was often enabled to give assistance in quarters when it was required, by his generosity. He died in Christian faith and tranquillity, in his eightieth year, at Bath.

A third valued friend and benefactor to this Diocese, who assisted me in my first effort in Church building, in the year 1841, has also been called away,—W. Gibbs, Esq., of Tyntesfield, near Bristol. His name will long be remembered in England from his munificent charities; and in 1868, I had the happiness of consecrating, at the request of my former Diocesan, the late Bishop of Exeter, the noble Church he built and endowed at an expense of £28,000, in the city of Exeter. "Unto their assembly may my soul be united,"

"In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love."

With regard to the financial position and prospects of the Diocese, though we may expect this year to be a year of considerable trial and difficulty, we have reason to be encouraged, looking at the matter from the course of several years. I am informed by a Churchman who has devoted much time and labour to the interests of the Church, that if we allow $9,000 as a fair estimate of contributions to the Church Society, and parish payments in aided parishes about the year 1868, that it is probable that under the Board of Home Missions, nearly $50,000 has been raised from that time to the present, over and above what might have been expected under the old system; and the Board have been enabled to raise the average stipend, about $100, besides maintaining several new posts. Our inability to raise the stipend of the Missionaries to a more reasonable amount is only prevented by the backwardness of a few parishes, which hold back, and refuse to contribute with their brethren. No equitable reason can be given to shew that gentlemen, living in quiet country parishes, should refuse to contribute less in proportion to their means than their neighbors, or should call on those who live in town parishes to make up their deficiencies; and in many cases, the subscriptions to the Church Society ill accord with the known wealth of the donors. Wealthy persons still receive aid contentedly, when they could afford to do without it, and should be ashamed to take it. The present visitation, which has consumed property by thousands, is doubtless intended to remind many, that what has been irrecoverably lost, might have been laid up in the book of God's remembrance, where none of it would have perished.

It must not, however, be forgotten, that contributions which we see in print do not include the numerous instances in which improvements have been effected in our Churches, and loving gifts have been bestowed on the poor and needy. It is pleasant

also to see that whereas for many years no offerings were made for Missions beyond the borders of our own Province, that during the last year more than $2,000 was contributed through various channels for this good purpose, independently of what has been given in clothing to the inmates of the Shingwauk Home, and the large contributions which has been sent from different parts of the Province to the sufferers by the fire.

Nor do I mention such gifts as the only, or as the chief tokens of spiritual life. They are only proofs of faith and love within the soul. But where they are wholly absent, we fear that the love of God has never taken root.

The growth of sin, and the general deterioration of public morality in many important matters, is indeed an alarming feature of our times. We see indications of self-will in general dislike and contempt of authority, unbelief openly avowed, exceeding selfishness, enormous waste and needless luxury; a scarcely disavowed Universalism taints the faith of thousands; and flagrant dishonesty occurs in public and in private accounts; a general distrust is felt in large classes of the community; in great calamities, multitudes resort to plunder and robbery with an eagerness which betrays an entire absence of all moral principle, of all kind and humane feelings; a frantic desire is prevalent to hear the sensational, without regard to the seriousness of the speaker, or the truth of what is said; so that what is misnamed charity is sometimes no more than unbelief in any distinctive Christian doctrine, under the pretence that all teaching is equally good, or alike indifferent. Such are some of the terrible evils we have to encounter. But it would be unjust to society at large, and to Providence, not to acknowledge with thankfulness the tokens we daily witness of holy, reverent fear of God, humble self-denial, patient endurance of sickness and losses, daily charitable efforts to do good, purity of life, constant sobriety, honesty and

uprightness in all the transactions of business, unswerving loyalty to our Church even under the most unfavorable circumstances, and regular attendance at the ordinances of our Church, with a perceptible increase of devout communicants. When the tares and the wheat so plainly grow side by side in the same field, we cannot fail to ask ourselves with fear and trembling, Has the enemy sowed those tares while we slept?

One unexpected trial has arisen, which, I need scarcely say, has filled me with great anxiety. I allude to a new sect, which has been formed, borrowing the name, but casting aside many of the doctrines of our Church, especially of those doctrines which concern our baptism, our communion with the Lord, our orders, and our discipline. In these important points, our services were, as you all know, settled for us by the Reformers of our Church, who adopted what they did not make, and handed down to us what has been considered and ratified by successive Convocations. To this Prayer-Book, as it stood in 1662, and as it now stands unaltered, we have all set our hands, as in our belief, agreeable to the word of God. If it is so agreeable, I do not know why we should desire to alter it. The movement to which I allude originated, I think it is not uncharitable to say, in the ambition of a single Bishop, who, when he found that he could not crush opponents of his own ideas, and drive them out of the Church, put himself out of it. How he reckoned on carrying with him Bishops, Priests, and even whole Dioceses; how grievously he was disappointed in the personal friends who remonstrated, and refused to follow him; how, even with their consent, he was at length deposed by the American Episcopal Church, can hardly be denied, for it is simply matter of history. As far as we have suffered from his rebuff, it has been either from cases in which Church discipline was set at naught, or from pre-existing dislike to the

teaching of our Church, or from some personal dislike, or from long-standing differences among parishioners on other than religious grounds. It was to be expected of you, my brethren, and I am grateful to you for satisfying my expectation, that you would give no countenance to this attempt to rend the Church. You have all stood firm to your recorded vows, and you have carried with you the most esteemed and intelligent of the laity. You have known that our Church is one of the most tolerant of all religious bodies; and though you may have differences of interpretation on some points of faith or practice, you have wisely forborne to persecute or to prosecute those who differ, or embitter strife and stifle brotherly feelings by attacks on each other in the secular or religious newspapers. Our constant association as friends in Council, in Deanery meetings, at the Diocesan boards, in Synod, and at various times and places, has, I trust, under God's blessing, led us to see how many and how strong are our points of union, and how well we may bear with the infirmities of judgment in others, when we know how much need we have to pray for "a right judgment in all things" ourselves.

I am bound, indeed, more than any other person, to thank you all for the courtesy, hospitality, and good feeling with which you have welcomed my coming amongst you, and for the unvarying support you have rendered me, both in the Church Society, and as President of the Synod. The laity also have given as freely and abundantly of their valuable time and experience, and have been as brothers to us in every good work. And not only in financial matters, but in giving form to the discipline of our Church, we owe much to their patient and assiduous labour. The busiest among them have often worked the hardest, and I hope the time will come when there will not be a lay man in the Diocese, who does not think it an honour to spend and be spent in the work of the Church.

There are many other topics on which I should have been desirous to offer you advice, but I must confine myself to two which appear to call for consideration. The first is that of a Mission to any particular town or parish, in order to quicken its spiritual life, and revive its zeal. A Mission is usually conducted by a clergyman unconnected with the parish, because it is supposed that a stranger can appeal more forcibly to the consciences of his hearers. But when a stranger thus takes possession, as it were, of the services for the time being, and is foremost in all public addresses, it is obvious that he ought to be a man of considerable experience, and of undoubted judgment and prudence. An eloquent and earnest man, who does not possess these qualifications, may move the affections and sway the emotions of his audience, but is not sure to direct their awakened energies into a right channel. The use of a Mission must be judged of, not by the excitement when the Missionary is present, but by the results when the excitement has subsided, and things have returned to their normal state. In such assemblies it may happen that a large number of the attendants are not members of our Church, nor indeed do they belong to any body of Christians. Their usual feeling of indifference to all rather inclines them to take part in any new sensational proceeding. If the Missionary wishes to attract such persons, he may preach as if the usual congregation were heathens, and the Church had no root among them. He may entirely put out of sight every ordinary means of grace, every rite which does not seem equally attractive with his own discourses. Instead of taking for granted what has been done, and building upon the same foundation, he may speak as if no foundation had been laid, and simply aim at a great sensation. The results of such teaching could never be effectual; for when the sensation is past, there would be a strong re-

action in the direction of indifference. Church doctrines and Church ordinances would be more unpalatable than ever, because they had been so ostentatiously ignored, and it had been taken for granted that they were of no validity whatever. As it was supposed that the Holy Spirit never accompanied them with His saving grace, and that they were lifeless forms, they would seem more lifeless than ever when the supposed irresistible impulse had passed away, and the effect had not been found permanently useful. Thus the whole of the Christian life would appear to consist in a succession of leaps and bounds, and unregulated successes, rather than of daily and humble progress in continual dependence on the invisible assistance of the promised Spirit of God. And would not this be walking by sight, rather than by faith? The same observations apply to the services held, and even to the hymns sung. Unless they are in accordance with our own appointed method of instruction, they will only unsettle the minds of our people, and will do us more harm than good. What we need is to strengthen the things that are "in us," even though in some they seem ready to die, by binding, not by loosing, all the ties which connect us with the Church of God, in which his Holy Spirit dwells, and will dwell forever, if we seek His aid, and believe in His presence.

A like caution must be given in reference to invitations to Holy Communion at such times. If such invitation were given indiscriminately, it might happen that not only the unconfirmed, but the unbaptized might suppose themselves to be fit partakers. By such admission, which would be impossible to avoid after a general invitation, we should oppose the practice of the Inspired Apostles, as well as the rules of our Church. We could not consistently maintain that baptism is "generally necessary to salvation," and especially necessary before Holy

Communion. The very word "Communion" would assume a new and entirely unscriptural meaning; we could not tell people, as our Church orders us to do, that "none is to be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed."

Knowing, therefore, as we must know, that multitudes come only to hear, without reference to the truth of the speaker's doctrine, it must be provided, that the Missionary be a person of large experience, wise judgment, and well-tried loyalty to the Church, if we expect the result of his efforts to be permanently beneficial and helpful to our ministry. Of course you will not understand me to mean that our services could not be adapted to any special exigency, abbreviated where necessary, and fitted for so important an occasion. But in all new movements, it is the part of Christian wisdom to control and regulate, as well as to quicken; and to make provision against the possible dangers, as well as to endeavour to secure the advantages of the situation.

The other subject on which I desire to say a word, is the spiritual result we should endeavour to draw from this calamitous fire, and the means which may, under God, contribute to this result. Whilst we ought to be especially thankful for the great charity which has been shewn in all quarters towards the sufferers, this is, after all, only an alleviation of our temporal wants. The good effect must, under the Divine blessing, come from within, not from without. A general reformation, we can hardly, I fear, expect to witness. It seems as hopeless, as to "force the course of a river." But no doubt, many will be led to own, that God has spiritual blessings in store for them, under the guise of temporal evils, and will obtain from their sorrows lasting good.

We wish to see a deep humiliation of soul under the mighty hand

of God. We wish men to acknowledge that it is a judgment, not a mere accident; in which the innocent indeed may suffer with the guilty, but in which we dare not fix on individuals as the cause of the evil, but must share with them in the effects. We pray that this suffering may not only lead them to rebuild their houses, but to improve their lives. We desire to see more plain living, and high thinking. We wish no longer to find young men and women indulging in expenses far exceeding their income, and in consequence, tempted to rush into wild speculations, or dishonest dealings with their employers; but incurring no debts which they cannot afford to pay, and free from the kindred vices of gambling, intemperance, fraud, and licentiousness. Above all, we would wish to see them such Christians as the Apostle describes, living temples of the Holy Ghost, pure in conversation, honest in business, full of undissembled love, "abhorring what is evil, cleaving to what is good, patient towards all men, not wise in their own conceits, of the same mind one toward another, and overcoming evil with good." And when we hear the wish uttered, that the City of St. John may rise from her ashes grander and richer than ever, we would proclaim in men's ears, Righteousness is the true riches, which never makes to itself wings and flies away.

It is for us, my brethren, to set an example of this Christian spirit; to take care that our families be models of purity, simplicity, and prudence; to live in debt to no man; to aim at the highest standard of truth, — that our example may shed lustre on our profession, and crown an humble and laborious life with a peaceful, Christian, and most blessed end.